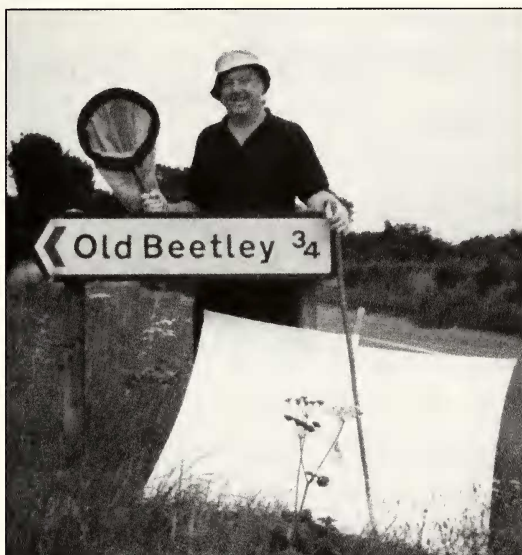


## OBITUARY

DAVID ALFRED PORTER  
1940–2003

David Alfred Porter was born in Bridport, Dorset on 24 October 1940. Son of a stone mason and a children's nurse he died on 21 July 2003 aged 62, after a long and bravely fought illness. He was educated at Grove School, St Ronan's School and Bridport Grammar School and after taking his 'A' levels in Biology and Chemistry, moved to Saffron Walden, Essex, for his first teaching appointment in October 1959 where he taught general subjects including English, History, Agricultural Science and Games at the local Technical and Secondary Modern School. In October 1960 David enrolled for a three year course at Westminster Teacher Training College. Afterwards he taught Biology at Barnwell Secondary Modern School at Stevenage, Herts and in 1964 initiated the school's Natural History Society and soon found room in his laboratory for moth emergence cages and store boxes for insect collections. The society proved so popular that at one time over 100 of the school's 700 pupils were members! David subsequently moved into an old rectory that adjoined the school and with its sizeable basement the society's storage space was expanded to include tropical freshwater fish, animal hutches and even a tank of marine crustaceans. Between September 1966 and June 1970, David undertook a University of London external degree in Botany and Zoology with Geology as a subsidiary and continued to teach at Stevenage whilst attending classes at Luton College.

Following his marriage to Celia Susan Furness on 29 July 1972 at St Mary's Church, Shephall, Stevenage, David moved to Hailsham, East Sussex where he was appointed Head of Biology at the town's Comprehensive School. He took early retirement in 1993 and this at last allowed him to devote more time to entomology.

David joined the society in 1987 and his entomological interests are recorded as Coleoptera, Heteroptera and Diptera. In fact David took an active interest in all insect Orders, but beetles were always his favourite group. He travelled to many

parts of Britain in pursuit of his hobby but was especially fond of the coastal cliffs near his birthplace in Dorset and it was his ambition to publish an update to the list of Coleoptera recorded from that county. David also made several noteworthy entomological discoveries in Dorset and Sussex. He was co-author of a paper introducing the lygaeid bug *Nysius senecionis* (Schilling) to Britain (Hodge & Porter, 1997). Other important finds included the fourth British specimen of *Platycis cosnardi* (Chevrolat) (Col., Lycidae) in June 1984 near Duncton, West Sussex (Porter, 1987), *Annomatus deikeyi* Reitter (Col., Bothrideridae) in 1995 in a subterranean pitfall trap set in his Hailsham garden (Porter, 1998), *Gronops inaequalis* Boheman (Col., Curculionidae) from the Crumbles near Eastbourne in 1996 (Porter, 1998), the subterranean weevil *Raymondionymys marqueti* Aubé (Raymondionymiidae) in a subterranean pitfall trap set in his father's garden at Bridport, Dorset in 1997 (Porter, 1998), and he was the first to find a British male of *Bruchidius varius* (Olivier) (Col., Bruchidae) in September 1996 on a road verge near Plumpton, East Sussex, thus solving the mystery of its specific identity (Hodge, 1997).

The photograph above captures David's sense of humour perfectly and it is fitting that this one was chosen for publication. Even when incapacitated by illness, David retained his enthusiasm for entomology. For example, on a bright sunny day in early May 2003, after what was to be his penultimate appointment at Eastbourne District General Hospital, Celia drove him onto the Downs, and although not strong enough to walk unaided and sweep at the same time, he was still on the look out for opportunities to do a little collecting. So, as they drove home along the coast road towards Birling Gap, David held his sweep net out of the sun roof, the material billowing as the car moved along! He was still interested and wondered what was 'out and about' to the very end.

David's collections of immaculately mounted British insects, mainly Coleoptera but also some Diptera, Hemiptera and Hymenoptera, have been donated to the Booth Museum of Natural History, Brighton. Our sincere condolences are extended to David's widow Celia, his son Richard, daughter Vanessa and his father Albert.

Much of the above information was extracted from "A tribute to David Alfred Porter, 24th October 1940–21st July 2003" prepared and read at David's funeral service on 29 July 2003 at the Church of St Peter and St Paul, Hellingly, East Sussex by his son Richard. A copy of the full text will be stored in the BENHS archives at Dinton Pastures.

PETER HODGE

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